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Leslie Seifert in Rancho San Diego.

SPECIAL DISTRICTS: Pay As You Go For Just About Anything

Streetlights. Medians and parkways. Landscaping. Sewers.

In many parts of the County, development and management of districts for these services fall under DPW's Special Districts, a section of Management Services.

Districts can be formed for just about any purpose or service that government provides. They're also formed for libraries, emergency communication systems, fire suppression, trails, refuse collection and ambulance or paramedic service. Stormwater Maintenance Districts are formed by developers to support mandates. Assessment Districts, as well as dozens of other district types are available for just about any need imaginable.

The section team includes nine staff plus two students. Unit Manager Pat Finn along with Pat Petersen and Robert Romero supervise the two primary areas of responsibility.

Petersen manages the Countywide Lighting District, the first formed in California. Electrician

Tony Blas repairs streetlights within 5 business days and field checks all new installations. Engineering Technician Rowel Francisco assists the land development process by determining locations for new streetlights, processing District annexations and providing plan checks and system tracking.

Petersen is also responsible for forming Underground Utility Districts and is the County's Assessment Engineer for all special districts.

Romero, with the assistance of Leslie Seifert, Susana Howell and Alicia Zlotnick form and manage most new districts. They are also responsible for administering 90 existing districts.

Secretary Sharon Ming supports staff through an extensive customer tracking system she created, monitors and updates daily. She supports staff by annually mailing out hundreds of budget revisions, mailed ballots and thousands of property owner bulletins.

From the Director's Desk

EXPERIENCE IS ONE OF THE MOST VALUABLE ASSETS IN ANY ORGANIZATION. When experienced people leave that organization, they hopefully will have trained their successors well.

In the next couple of months, DPW will lose hundreds of years of experience as some of our staff retires. We'll be losing some important people and we wish them well in their new endeavors. These are dedicated people who helped build this department into the strong customer-oriented organization it is today.

One strong aspect of DPW is your willingness to

teach coworkers and subordinates how things are done and how best to serve the citizens of San Diego County. Even with the loss of some of our key men and women, we're able to continue our commitments to our customers.

The folks who are retiring will be deeply missed, but they've left a legacy that inspires those who step forward to take their places.

John Snyder,
Director

Safety & Wellness

Static at Gas Pump = BOOM at Station



by Carl Spiron, Safety Officer

You've watched prices soar at the gas pump lately, but more than the cost per gallon can go up dramatically if you're not careful. It's an explosive situation.

The static charge created while pumping gas can cause an explosion. Movement between yourself and the car seat causes some of that build up of static electricity and there is also evidence that materials used in manufacturing "high mileage" tires contribute to the problem.

Did you know that the rubber boot on the gas nozzle for vapor recovery greatly reduces the risk of static-related ignition?

What can you do?

Don't get back in your car while fueling.

Passengers should remain in the car, but if they have to get out, don't let them touch the gas nozzle since they may have a static charge.

Turn your vehicle's engine off before fueling.

When filling a gasoline can, always place it on the ground while filling. Never fill it while it is in your car or truck.

For answers to your questions about hazards at gas stations, visit the Petroleum Equipment Institute web site: www.pei.org/faq/static.htm.

Training

Good Ideas 2003–2004

by Kirsten Aaboe-Hope, Training Officer

This year DPW focuses on Good Ideas related to the three Strategic Initiatives in order to increase productivity. Suggestions to enhance safe and livable communities, the lives of children and the environment from individuals and teams will be mined and developed.

Each section in DPW is to be challenged to come up with at least one process improvement related to a Strategic Initiative that can be implemented into their work to enhance productivity, or improve processes between their section and other DPW sections, or improve efficiencies between their section and an external customer.

Before submittal, section staff need to agree the process improvement is feasible, and the manager must commit to the Good Idea's implementation.

Section supervisors will use regular meetings or hold ad hoc meetings aimed at generating ideas. Process for this will vary, and may begin with topics such as flow-charting processes, identifying bottlenecks, addressing problem areas, discussing the section's relationship to the strategic plan. The Training Office will assist managers

and supervisors to develop facilitation of creative idea development as requested.

Each section will be encouraged to use a process improvement model similar to the one outlined below.

IMPROVEMENT CHALLENGE STEPS

- Decide on team facilitator for the exercise
- Brainstorm ideas and decide which to review further
- Post notes identifying all ideas on the wall
- Discuss strengths and weaknesses or benefits and barriers of each idea
- Refine list to one or two possible candidates, considering feasibility, scope
- Develop a list of tasks needed to develop the idea further
- Assign section members to gather information
- Establish a tentative implementation timeline
- Submit idea and plan to the manager
- Prepare idea proposal for manager using Good Ideas Report form
- Submit final idea proposal to manager for approval
- Upon approval, establish final timeline and responsible parties for each task
- Follow through to keep action items on target
- Send a Good Ideas Report to the Training Office

Transportation

Piggybacking Saves Bucks

If you've shopped for a new car lately, you know it's going to cost you \$15–30,000 to drive it off the lot. But imagine the bargaining power you'd have if several other buyers joined you in haggling the price of a vehicle.

That, in essence, is what DPW's Fleet Manager Jim Whitlock does as often as possible. It's called "piggybacking" and it saves the department thousands of dollars.

"The frequency varies," Whitlock said. "This fiscal year, we've used four contracts for a total of nine pieces of equipment."

There are some factors that determine whether a piggyback will be used. First, there has to be a contract available to piggyback for an item DPW needs. Second, Whitlock has to look at specifications of the item to determine whether it will

meet the department's needs; if the item isn't suitable for its intended use, he doesn't proceed with the purchase request. Third, Whitlock works with County Fleet officials to provide information to Purchasing, so that they can determine whether the contract meets requirements.

"If we're able to piggyback on a contract where a large number of machines were originally bid, then costs should be lower than what we would expect to see for bidding a smaller number" Whitlock said. "If we're able to piggyback a contract in a situation where the manufacturer and competitors have all experienced price increases, then we can realize some savings from avoiding that increase."

All piggybacks are with governmental agencies. DPW is not allowed to use private-sector contracts. The agencies are normally other cities and counties, and with one exception, have been located in California.

Management Services

Verizon on Horizon

Cell phones — love 'em or hate 'em, they're part of doing business today. For most DPW staffers with County-issued cell phones, Verizon is on the horizon.

"We have a variety of service providers in the department," said Roberto Salazar of Special Projects. "We're bringing everyone under one umbrella."

That means new phones for everyone, Salazar said. But, before you get frustrated, he also said the new instruments will provide the same type service on an employee's current set up. If, for example, your section uses a push to talk feature, you can have a similar service with Verizon.

Don't worry about having to enter all those phone numbers you've programmed into your current phone either. Telephone coordinator, Roy Gray, says those contact names and numbers can be transferred to your new unit. And, in most cases, your telephone number remains the same.

Conversion to Verizon began in early March.

Land Development/Engineering Services

Fires Out, Work Far From Over

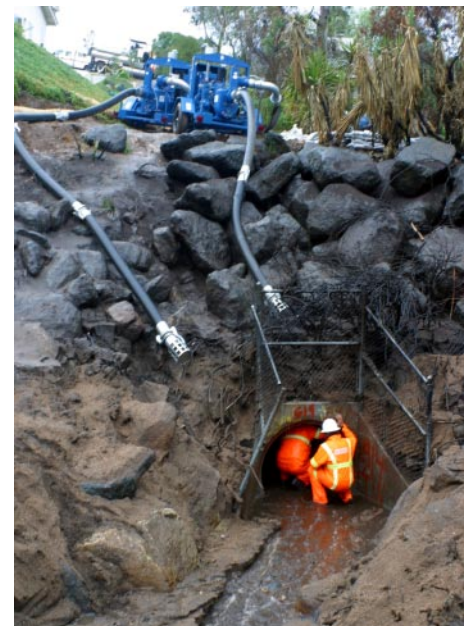


Removing debris in Lakeside.

Flames are out in San Diego County but their impact is still felt by residents and DPW staff.

Debris clean up and removal, installing erosion control devices (BMPs), and battling stormwater are major tasks for Flood Control, Stormwater, Road crews and other department sections.

Working with private contractors, volunteers, and the California Conservation Corps, DPW removed tons of debris from burned homes scattered from Harbison Canyon to Valley Center. Thousands of BMPs are in place to help prevent serious damage from winter rains. During recent rain events, crews worked 12-hour shifts 24 hours a day to protect lives and property.



Jim Torres and Pete Swenson check culvert near Ramona.

Scout Turns Land Sliver to Scenic Site

It's only a sliver of a median at Grossmont Boulevard and Fuerte Drive near Mt. Helix. You probably wouldn't even notice it — it's between the main intersection and right turn strip.

Drive by the intersection today and you'll see it — a small patch of grass, a planter filled with flowers and an easily recognizable sign welcoming you to Grossmont and Mt. Helix.

That's thanks to the efforts of Eagle Scout candidate Cameron Poall. The high school senior had to learn a lot before he could begin. He took classes with a contractor on how to install turf, and learned how to repair a broken and displaced curb line. He repainted the sign and added flowers to the planter.

DPW's Vegetation Manager, Ernie Comagon, was impressed with Poall's efforts.

"What was once an insignificant piece of land is now beautiful to look at," Comagon said. "This project is a great example of how citizens can participate in their community and improve their surroundings."



Poall's sliver of Mt. Helix.

Names of Note

Promotions

John Engle — Civil Engineer to Senior Civil Engineer

Zemirah Lee — Intermediate Clerk Typist to Senior Clerk

New Hires

Jill Bankston — Civil Engineer, Watershed Protection

Nicholas Del Valle — Environmental Health Specialist II, Watershed Protection

Yared Gebreyesus — Environmental Health Specialist II, Watershed Protection

Cezarina Gramada — Environmental Health Specialist I, Watershed Protection

Meri Karafin — Intermediate Clerk Typist, Administrative & Support Services

Barry Pulver — Hydrogeologist, Inactive Waste Management

Transfers

Evaluz Zarnes — Purchasing & Contracting to Watershed Protection

Milestones



Stephen Ingalls — Engineering Technician III, Traffic Engineering

Jim Pritchett — Land Surveyor, Field Surveys



Ron Farnsworth — Land Use Technician I, Counter & Support Services

Mario Rubio — Construction Technician, Private Development Construction Engineering



Nick Ortiz — Associate Transportation Specialist, Route Locations

Ramon Santos — Construction Technician, CIP Construction Engineering

Alberto Valdez — Engineering Technician III, Traffic Engineering



Edgar Garcia — Assistant Engineer, Field Engineering

Tom Hart — Civil Engineer, CIP Construction Engineering

Joel Lifschultz — Junior Surveyor, Field Surveys

Jamie Nicholas — Engineering Technician III, Field Surveys

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

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Dianne Jacob, District 2
Pam Slater-Price, District 3
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Bill Horn, District 5

Chief Administrative Officer
Walt Ekard

Deputy Chief Administrative Officer
Robert R. Copper

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